

Minutes Quantitative Literacy Committee Tuesday December 2nd 9:00 a.m.

Present: Members Jennifer Coy, David Chattin, Karen Donnelly (Chair), Michael Oakes, Rob Reuter.

1. Minutes of the November 18th meeting were approved.
2. The primary focus of this meeting was a discussion of how quantitative literacy fits with the mission of the College.

Two documents were distributed:

- a) Rob Reuter distributed an excerpt from the preface to a quantitative reasoning text by William Briggs that cited data from an article “Education: The Knowledge Gap”, Wall Street Journal, 2/9/90, equating various levels of language skills and math skills and noting the skill level requirements for certain occupations. Occupations for college degree holders generally required level 4 through 6 (with the exceptions of elementary teacher – level 3).
- b) Karen Donnelly distributed an article by the same author, William Briggs, submitted to the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (April 3, 2002) called “Quantitative Literacy and SIAM”, which addresses the questions of what is quantitative literacy and what is its importance. He gives a list of mathematical themes associated with quantitative literacy and how they can be applied in real life situations.

Some of the remarks from the ensuing discussion

- Quantitative literacy is part of being a competent professional.
- Mathematics is part of liberal arts at every school we have investigated.
- We are pledged to liberal arts at Saint Joseph’s, but we are missing a significant component.
- Professor Whites email to Rob Reuter asking for five quantitative concepts that are essential to all college students is easily addressed (See Briggs list in “Quantitative Literacy and SIAM”.)
- It is easier to make a convincing argument about the need and mission fit for quantitative literacy than to overcome the hurdle of determining the logistics of how it happens at Saint Joseph’s.

3. Before the next meeting, Karen Donnelly will distribute a draft of a “statement of need” for quantitative literacy to critique and revise at the next meeting, with the goal of preparing a statement to present at the January faculty meeting.
4. At the next meeting the Committee will discuss arguments for a holistic approach to quantitative literacy over a department by department approach.
5. Two copies of the book *Current Practices in Quantitative Literacy* will be distributed to Committee members to review.
6. The next meeting will be scheduled for the beginning of next semester once members’ schedules have been confirmed.
7. The committee adjourned at 9:45 a.m.